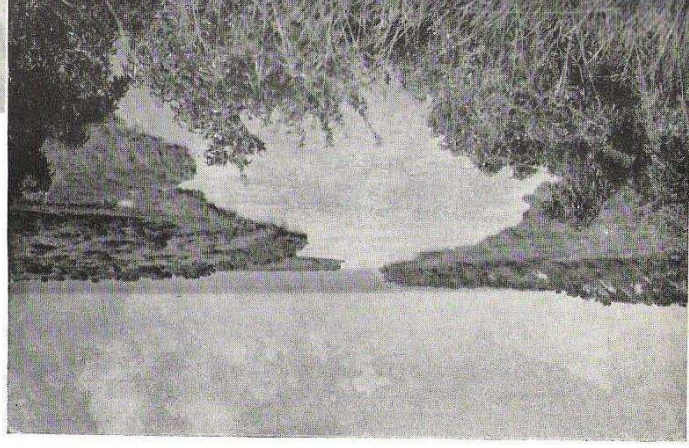


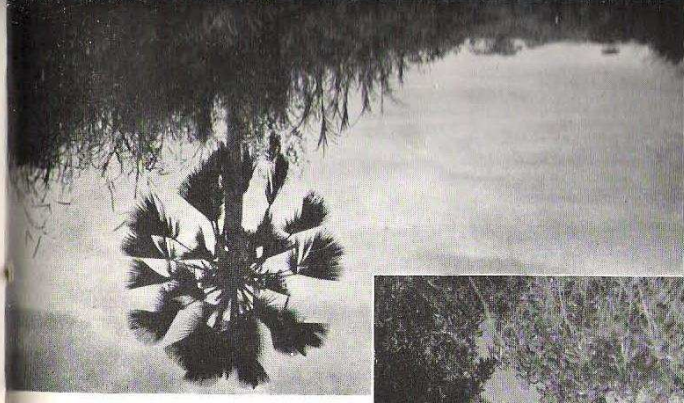
e. THE UPPER SEMLIKI SECTION.

This section, which is on the Equator, runs from the northern shore of Lake Edward to the Beni-Kasindi road. It is a plain covered with euphorbia and borassus palms (*photo 35*), traversed by the forest which border the banks of the winding course of the Semliki river. This river which carries the waters of Lake Edward to Lake Albert, has its source at Ishango (*photo 34*), in a particularly picturesque spot, accessible to visitors.

From one of the cliffs, may be seen a wonderful panorama of the lake and the wild life which abounds there. Here elephant and buffalo are numerous, but the antelopes have practically disappeared. Before being made a Reserve and then a National Park, this plain of the upper Semliki had been turned into a slaughterhouse by Europeans and natives alike, so that few antelope were left. But total extinction has fortunately been avoided in time and now a few herds are gathering again.



34. Ishango.
The Semliki river flowing
out of Lake Edward.
(Photo J.P. Harroy.)



35. Upper-Semliki plain.
Borassus.
(Photo J.P. Harroy.)

f. THE MIDDLE SEMLIKI SECTION.

Between the Beni-Katwe road and the northern boundaries of the Park, this section comprises a typical example of equatorial forest (*photo 36*).

It is well irrigated by the Semliki itself and by its numerous tributaries, which pour down from the slopes of Ruwenzori, carrying quantities of water of glacial origin.

This forest is so dense that it is difficult to penetrate. A few tribes of pygmies still live there, unaffected by any European influence. A number of specially trained pygmies were recently engaged by the Commissioner stationed at Mutisora with a view to obtaining an approximate census of the okapis there. The okapi is, in fact, threatened with extinction, as it is an object of prey to the natives who covet it not only on account of its palatable meat, but for its valuable skin.

As the natural abode of the okapi is practically inaccessible to Europeans, its protection is as difficult as it is necessary. The census recently carried out in this portion of the «Parc National Albert» showed, fortunately, a figure somewhat higher than those interested had dared to hope.



36. Butahu. - Equatorial forest. - (Photo J.P. Harroy.)

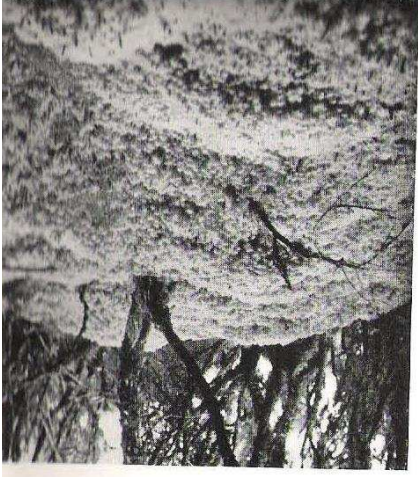


39. Ruwenzori
Muhanga, 5,300 Metres.
Heath-trees and lichen.
(Photo J.P. Harroy).

This gradual change from one species to another is one of the most interesting aspects for all naturalists visiting the «Parc National Albert»: there are few spots in the world which comprise every type of vegetation from the most dense equatorial growth to stunted moss and lichen at glacier level.

After the lower mountain forest (photo 37) come bamboos and a few clusters of hagenias. Then between 2,500 m. (8,200 f.) and 3,000 m. (10,000 f.) there are lichen-draped heath-trees (photos 40), with colourful mosses, sometimes as much as a metre (over 3 f.) in depth. The whole appearance of this region is fairylike, with the tortured shapes of the tree trunks, their tresses of lichen, and the vivid colours of the moss.

Higher up, there are *senecio*, *hyperticum*, *lobelia*, everlasting flowers, and *alchemilla*, which remind one of the scenery in the Mikeno section. The ascent of the mountain by the Belgian slopes is generally made from Mutwanga, via the valley of the Butahu.



40. Ruwenzori (Camp des Pierres).
Moss, Heath-trees.
(Photo J.P. Harroy).



37. Butahu valley.
Tree-ferns.
(Photo J.P. Harroy).

Apart from the okapi, elephant, buffalo, and many varieties of monkeys live in the dense and humid undergrowth, a veritable hot-house where myriads of tiny organisms pursue their task of organic disintegration.

8. THE RUWENZORI SECTION.

Only an imaginary line, without biological significance, can be found to mark the western boundaries of this section. Apart from the 1,500 metres (5,000 feet) level, there are no fixed zones to mark the different stages of vegetation which pass from the great equatorial forest at the foot to alpine flora at the summit.

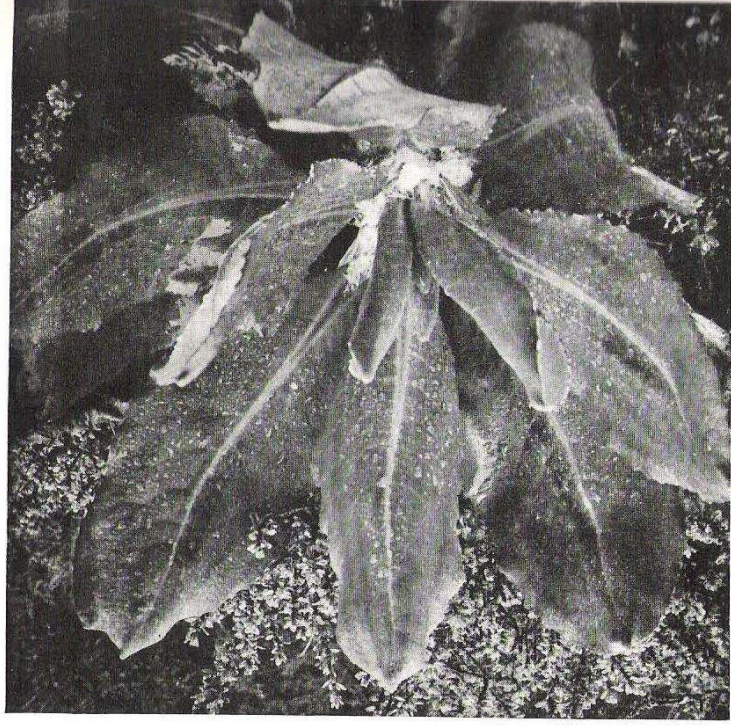


38. Ruwenzori
Camp of the Bottes.
1,150 Metres.
Heath-trees.
(Photo J.P. Harroy).

This itinerary, which was adopted by the Belgian Ruwenzori expedition in 1932, leads through the village of Kalonge and over the ridge of Mohangu (photo 39), to the famous « Camp of the Bottles » (photo 38) which overlooks Black Lake. On leaving this camp, where the climatic conditions (photo 41) make existence difficult for natives as well as Europeans, the glaciers (photo 42) can be reached in a few comparatively easy stages. An approach can be made to the White and Grey Lakes, and also to the famous Green Lake (photo 43), where the strange colour of the waters and the weird shapes of the vegetation produce one of the most extraordinary and imposing sights to be seen anywhere in the world.

To reach the summit proper of the chain, Margherita Peak (5,119 m. apprx. 16,800 f.), an alpinist's equipment and experience are necessary, and only a few experts dare attempt the final ascent. There is a fascinating description of the difficulties of this climb in the splendid book published by the 1932 Ruwenzori Expedition under the auspices of the « Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique ». (*)

(*) « RUWENZORI » - Edition R. Duprez - Bruxelles.



41. Ruwenzori (Camp F.N.R.S., 4300 m.). - Snow on senecio in the background (Michanilla). (Photo J.P. Hanoy).

42. Ruwenzori. Snow, Glacier, Ice crystal. (by H.J. Bredo).



43. Ruwenzori - The Green Lake. - (Photo H.J. Bredo).



The animals, now that few are left from the generations which were hunted and killed by men, live in quiet proximity to the villages and are gradually losing all fear, showing themselves quite indifferent to the presence of man. Take, for example, the village of Katanda, where two buffaloes were seen to pass peacefully and in broad daylight through the village without causing the slightest disturbance. Along the borders of the National Parks there are some native settlements which are worthy of note: in Ruanda, close to the Mikenso section, there are the first of

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It has already been said that, as far as possible, the native population has been transferred outside the boundaries of the National Parks. An exception, however, had to be made in favour of the pygmies, little hunters, who almost form part of the natural fauna. In their natural surroundings in the Mikenso, Nyamuragira and Middle Semliki sections, a few tribes of Batwa are still hunting and living their normal lives. The Institute employs a certain number of them as auxiliary keepers, thus teaching them to help in the protection of their native surroundings, which are essential for their existence and welfare. In the Kibati region, southeast of Nyiragongo, it is possible to meet some of these quaint people (*photo 44*) through Chief Kahembe. A gift of a few pounds of salt or a few pots of beer will effect an introduction to the tribes and their ceremonial dances and songs. These, when given in the evening by the campfire, are an unforgettable spectacle for the tourist, and appeal to his artistic emotion.

On Ruwenzori there is a track leading to the « Camp of the Bottles », and, if required, trained bearers and guides can be engaged to conduct the tourist to the glacier levels.

On the plains where game abounds, travelling is possible by car: the level ground lends itself to this comfortable and speedy means of transport. Travelling by car has another great advantage: it rarely frightens the animals, who are more afraid of the scent than of the sight of man. Provided the regulations of keeping to the roads and of not



44 Kibati.
Chief Kahembe's pygmies.
(Photo J.-P. Harroy).

B. ETHNOLOGY

the Watutsi tribes, a people of Nilotic origin, very tall and of a lively intelligence. And at Rutshuru the visitor can hear the drummers of Chief Ndeze perform. With the permission and assistance of the Territorial Administrator, near Beni, it is also possible to meet some pygmy groups.

C. TOURING.

In some sections visitors are forbidden to enter, in order to ensure the protection and propagation of certain types of animals, such as the gorilla, and the preservation of vegetation marking the stages of evolution of the new growths covering the recent lava. For other reasons, certain regions are closed to tourists, because of the dangers of navigation on Lake Edward and the impenetrable nature of the great Semliki forest.

In the mountainous Nyamuragira and Ruwenzori sections and on the plains of Rwindi-Rutshuru and the upper Semliki, special arrangements have been made to permit tourists to visit this wonderful country and observe its fauna and its varied landscapes. Arrangements can be made for parties wishing to make the ascent to the craters of Nyiragongo and Nyamuragira.

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45. Camping. - (Photo G.F. de Witte).

